



ISSUE 146

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ISLAMIC FOCUS

THE SPOTLIGHT ON
Afghanistan

SEARCHING FOR
SALAHUDEEN

GOOD & BAD OF
INFLUENCERS

WATER CRISIS
FROM THE QURAN & SUNNAH

Ahlan Wasahlan...

FROM THE EDITOR

This issue of the Islamic Focus comes with another offering of original articles.

Afghanistan comes under the spotlight as we unearth its rich heritage and culture, and explore its crucial position in events to come. Very little of its wonderful history is spoken or written about in mainstream media.

Our feature article is on influencers, the term for people who can sway the thought and decisions of thousands on social media. We explore the world of influence in fashion and gadgets, the good and the bad, and leave you with some tools to navigate these waters.

In the article on Salahuddeen, we analyse the life of a remarkable man, and offer his qualities as a blueprint for us to see success. Take a look at the world of Salahuddeen and how he became a force for good amidst so much oppression.

The current water crisis in

the Eastern Cape serves as an inspiration for the article on water. We cover how the entire water cycle is designed to connect us to Allah Ta'ala, along with some Sunnahs that many forget about that are connected to water. Look out for a delicious Sunnah in the article as well! An introspection on what causes drought, and ways we can benefit from water are also highlighted.

Our regular features include the inspiration section which has short, thought-provoking life lessons.

The Hadith verification feature looks at common Hadith questions concerning food,

Sit back and relax as you join us on this journey of discovery. Your thoughts are most welcome info@islamicfocus.co.za.

Muhammad Badsha
(Moulana)

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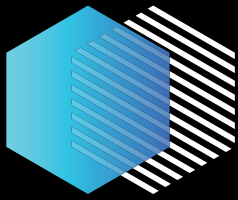
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Influencers



Through the course of our lives, we are subject to the influence of people around us. In our early days our parents shape our character and behavior, even our religious outlook. In a Hadith we are told that, **"Every child is born on the natural way of Islam and then his parents make him Jewish, Christian or Magian."** (Bukhari). Then at school, certain charismatic teachers might impact and influence our lives in a particular direction. Later it is the circle of friends that take on that role. **"A man follows the religion of his friend; so each one should reflect who he takes as his friend."** (Abu Dawood)

Besides the influence of people around us, we get moulded by the media we come into contact with. We form opinions based on the books or newspapers we read. We argue politics with opinions influenced by what we hear on the radio. With the advent of the television the influence was now both audio and visual. This meant a greater impact on our minds as there was no need to use our imagination to put a picture to the words.

Today we are at the point where social media is accessed by just over 50% of the world's population. That's a phenomenal exposure and influence by any standards. In 2020, over 4.2 billion people were using social media or around 55% of the world's population.

INFLUENCE IS OF TWO TYPES, GOOD AND BAD

The good influence has the power to transform nations. Islam spread through the influence of people. The Prophet ﷺ sent Muaz ibn Jabal ؓ to Yemen to call the people to Islam. Through his efforts, Yemen became the departure point for scholars and merchants who introduced Islam to many parts of the world such as Madagascar, parts of south East Asia and elsewhere.

Travelling Sufis played a huge role in bringing Islam to places like Central Asia where Abul Hassan al Kalamaati and Abul Hassan al Usbaanikaati did tremendous work in the 10th century. Sufism also played a leading role in bringing the people of Kashmir to Islam.

Traders also spread Islam where they went. The lands that came under Muslim rule after the early conquests included some of the most important trade routes such as the Silk Road, commercial centres like Damascus, and ports like Aden. Muslims also took over the spice trade across the Indian Ocean. Arab and Persian traders are credited with establishing Islam on the Malabar Coast of India.

Ulama who took up the Jihad and fight for survival against the Dutch invaders in Indonesia were

brought as political prisoners to the Cape in present day South Africa, and by 1850 their influence meant that Muslims were 40% of Cape Town's population.

The conversion of social, political and personal influencers to Islam played an important role in drawing their followers or admirers to the religion. Influencers is the modern term for influential people especially linked to social media. An example of an influential person spreading Islam is Sa'd ibn Muaz ؓ, one of the chiefs of the Banu Aws tribe in Madinah Munawwarah. When he informed his people that he had accepted Islam, his whole tribe had accepted the religion by nightfall. This in turn laid the platform for Madinah Munawwarah becoming the base for Muslims eventually.

The Prophet ﷺ sent letters to the rulers in the vicinity of Arabia implicitly acknowledging their role as social influencers, and inviting them and through them, their followers to Islam. The leaders of Byzantium, Abyssinia, Persia, and Alexandria among others were contacted. One of the reasons for engaging leaders is that the conversion of an influential political leader to Islam was an important milestone. The Prophet ﷺ met the leaders of the community in Taif and Makkah Mukarramah.

THE SECOND TYPE OF INFLUENCE IS THE BAD INFLUENCE

The Noble Quran states, *"So do not let one turn you away from it who does not believe in it and follows his desire, for you then would perish."* (20:16) This verse lists two grave consequences of the bad influence of people who become slaves to their material desires to the detriment of their purpose in life:

- 1 The danger to one's faith. One has to be extremely careful who we follow on social media, and obviously other platforms as well, regarding the rulings of Islam. There is a phenomenon on social media, as an example of the danger to one's beliefs, where a number of so-called Hijabi bloggers (ladies who post content while being dressed in scarves) have changed their views on Hijab, or revealed their adverse opinions on Hijab or even stopped wearing it completely. This after spending time building a following with the Hijab as a trademark. Followers tend to continue following the blog for advice that the ex Hijabi blogger is still offering on looks, fashion, etc. but is that sort of influence worth the risk?

As a teacher, I am acutely aware of the influence we can exert on young minds. On a micro level we are all influencers. Are we willing to take the chance of potentially being influenced and our beliefs corrupted? When one such blogger publicly disowned the Hijab in 2019, her image amassed 97,000 likes and 11,000 comments within five hours of being posted.

With regards to gaining knowledge of Islamic aspects, the social media platform can be a dangerous and confusing place. While there are outstanding Islamic scholars on the net, there are others who might present their arguments in a compelling and attractive manner, yet lack the skills and knowledge to truly guide. One's faith can be at risk, let alone this being an ideal breeding ground for extremism. Issues of belief can become confusing and doubt starts to creep in if we listen to so-called scholars pronounce on Islamic matters.

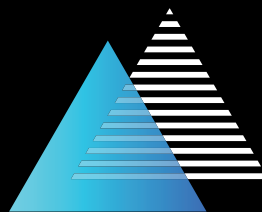
One of the qualities that will land people in Hell is having doubt in the fundamental beliefs of Islam. (Noble Quran 50:24-25)

- 2 The second danger is falling prey to the cult of commercialism and becoming a slave to material desires. The Noble Quran warns against becoming trapped under the influence of those who follow their desires (20:16). An overwhelming percentage of the social media influencers are in the fields of beauty, fashion and the latest gadgets, all portraying a glamour of life that you are missing out on. If you think back to the

influences that might have motivated those who went through their youth in the 80's and 90's, you will realize that the current influencer marketing is the classic celebrity endorsement of a lifestyle, wanting to be like your movie or TV celebrity, but placed in a contemporary, modern content-driven market.

Influencers are people with refined personal brands who have trusted, enthusiastic audiences. They can be traditional celebrities or relatively ordinary people who have managed to amass large amounts of faithful followers on social media. So the dynamics is different from the past but the essence is the same.

The modern social media influencer has the power to affect the purchasing decisions of others because of his or her authority, knowledge, position or relationship with his/her audience.



To understand the impact of social media, one merely needs to look at some of the statistics:

- 1 4,2 billion people use social media, or just over half of the world, and this is projected to grow.
- 2 On average, internet users spend 144 minutes a day on social media and messaging apps.
- 3 There are 4,66 billion active internet users worldwide or almost 60% of the global population.
- 4 Streaming company, Netflix, spent \$17,3 billion on content production in 2020. Investment of such large amounts points to a definite influence. Netflix's strategy is becoming increasingly clear – an agenda to push the limits in offering ever more explicit content and misleading ideologies.

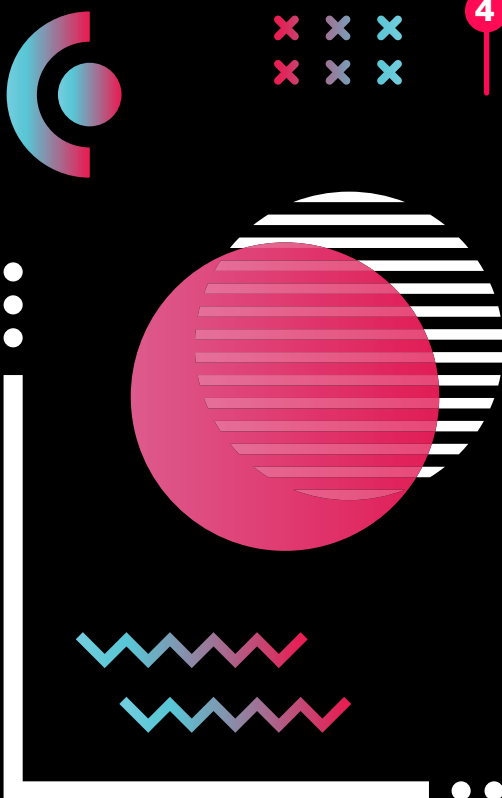
The global reach of social media gives us a glimpse into how Dajjal will be able to operate. He will be the ultimate influencer, and a culture of influence will surround him. If we are falling for the deception of the smaller deceivers now, what will the situation be when the Prophet ﷺ describes Dajjal's influence as the greatest test humanity will face from the beginning to the end of time. (Muslim)

Dajjal will have some powers which mimic the miracles that the Prophets performed:

- 1 High speed travel like Prophet Sulaiman ﷺ,
- 2 Medicine will be at its peak, mimicking the healing miracles of Prophet Esa ﷺ,
- 3 Rivers will be subjugated to him, and water sources and irrigation will be under his control, replicating the miracles of Prophet Musa ﷺ and water,
- 4 He will have control of the fruit and resources of the world.

The Noble Quran vividly describes the regret that followers of people of bad influence will have on the Day of Judgment, **"And the weak will say to those who were arrogant, "Indeed, we were your followers, so can you us in any way against the punishment of Allah?"** The influential people will reply that they are all in it together.

Allah ﷻ recounts the tragic conversation that will take place on the Day of Judgement between the followers and the influencers: "And if you could but see the wrongdoers, when they are made to stand before their Lord, blaming one another! Those deemed to be weak will say to those who were proud (the ones who influenced them), "Had it not been for you, we would have been believers!" The proud ones (influencers) will say to those deemed weak, "Did we turn you away from the guidance after it had come to you!? Rather, you yourselves were guilty." And those deemed weak will say to those who had been proud, "Rather, it was your night-and-day scheming to prod us to be ungrateful to Allah and set up other gods besides Him." But they will all keep their regret to themselves when they see the punishment." (Noble Quran 34:31-33)



SOME POINTS TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN FOLLOWING INFLUENCERS:

1 Ensure that you get guidance on Islamic matters from your local Imam and Ulama. Only follow a scholar on social media if you actually know his background. People tend to write off their local Ulama as boring when compared to celebrity scholars. An interesting point is that the saviour of the Muslims at the time of Dajjal will be the Mahdi, but prior to the point of him gaining the capability of leading the Muslim world it would appear that he will be largely unknown. **"The Mahdi will be from the family of the Prophet ﷺ. Allah ﷻ will make him capable in one night."** (Ibn Majah)

Ibn Kathir ﷺ mentions that Allah ﷻ will guide him, inspire him and will grant him blessings which he did not have prior to this. After this point he will be appointed the Khalifah of the Muslims. So don't think that because a scholar has no public popularity that he cannot guide you to Paradise. This is a deep fake plan of the devil to disconnect people from the scholars.

2 Always be alert to the fact that what is portrayed on social media is in all probability not the reality. While the posts might seem spontaneous, they are actually well planned and manipulated.

a. A popular female Japanese biker was unmasked as a 50 year old man who used a face-changing, gender swapping app to become

an influencer on Twitter. He used digitally altered images to create an illusionary world. Dajjal's whole persona will be built on deception to such a degree that people in an age of atheism and seeking spirituality will surround him as a prophet and god.

b. Media's false front is aptly highlighted with the case of Robin Williams. He was a famous actor and regarded as one of the best in his field. He was known for acting in films of substance which had serious life lessons. But behind the scenes he was battling drug and alcohol addiction, along with depression. In 2014 he committed suicide by hanging.

c. Kids aspire to a Youtuber or Tiktokker of note. And while it seems an endless life of perks, fame and opportunity, it is not that simple. The audience only sees the perfect part at the end and not the work going on behind it. A vlogger with 1,4 million followers committed suicide aged 18. In June 2020, another Tik Tok star with 1,1 million followers committed suicide aged 16. This was at the height of their surface popularity

3 Social media promotes an image of an ideal culture. Consumerism heads it and people keep buying the latest to keep up with trends. People buy goods and services to publicly display economic power, buying for fun and pleasure and without a plan or budget. Celebrity

endorsement of products and brands creates a craving in their followers to have the same. Influencer marketing is projected to be worth \$13,8 billion in 2021, while global spending on TV advertising in 2020 was still huge at \$191 billion.

The Hadith tells us that if a man has a valley of gold, he will crave for another until only the grave puts an end to this fever. (Ahmed, Bukhari)

4 The Hadith informs us that, **"Every Muslim will be forgiven except those who sin in public."** (Bukhari) A person sins and then posts his sins on social media for all to see. Social media is a track record that's extremely difficult to erase. Be wary of what you post. And on the Day of Judgment Angels will come as witnesses to our sins we have not asked forgiveness for. **"And everybody will come, along with one (angel) to drive (him to the field of reckoning) and one (angel) to testify (about his deeds)."** (Noble Quran 50:21)

To top it all, we become complicit in the Haraam and sin by viewing, following and liking other people's sins.

Use social media but don't get drawn into its murky world. Guard your faith with extreme jealousy and you will gain the sweetness in it. (Bukhari)

THE HAIRSTYLE

Inspiration

There once was a lady who woke up one morning, looked in the mirror, and noticed she had only three hairs on her head. "Well," she said, "I think I'll braid my hair today."

So she did and had a wonderful day.

The next day she woke up, looked in the mirror, and saw that she had only two hairs on her head. "Hmmm," she said, "I think I'll part my hair down the middle today." So she did and had a grand day.

The next day she woke up, looked in the mirror, and noticed that she had only one hair on her head. "Well," she said, "Today I'm going to wear my hair in a ponytail." So

she did and she had a fun, fun day.

The next day she woke up, looked in the mirror and noticed that there wasn't a single hair on her head. "Yeah!" she exclaimed, "I don't have to fix my hair today!"

Attitude plays a vital role in how we manage to overcome problem situations in life. The Quran encourages a positive attitude by asking us not to lose hope in the Mercy of Allah Ta'ala and by stating that after every difficult patch comes ease. The Hadith emphasises this by telling us that Allah Ta'ala shall deal with us according to the expectation we have of Him.

Live simply. Take every set back in life in your stride, knowing that

Allah Ta'ala, the Most Kind, has planned our life, never giving us more than we can handle. He is the Most Wise, therefore, the tests of life He gives us are full of wisdom.



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The spotlight on Afghanistan

Afghanistan is in the news of late due to the American withdrawal and the victory of the Taliban. Contrary to the western image being portrayed of a backward, uncultured, isolated country, Afghanistan is a land with centuries of culture and refinement. It sat on the Silk Road, a network of trade routes connecting the East and the West for 2000 years. This route was central to the economic, cultural, political and religious interactions between these regions.

Here are some significant moments in the history of this ancient, cosmopolitan country, a look at the current situation, and the role the region will play in future events as prophesied in the Hadith.

Afghanistan is famously known as the graveyard of empires, a reputation largely built on the fact that they held off the British Empire, the Soviet Union and now America. But the region was also the launchpad of empires in the past, and formed part of some of the largest and most significant of those which the world has ever seen. From the 5th century BC, it was part of the Persian Empire, the Greek Empire

of Alexander, the Mongol Empire, the empire of Timur, the Moghul Empire of Babur. Many of these used Afghanistan as a base in the expansion of their empires.

Persian Empire

Cyrus II of Persia was the founder of the Achaemenid Empire in 556 BC, the first Persian empire to exist. He created the largest empire the world had seen till then. He is also identified by certain scholars with Zul Qarnain of the Noble Quran. In this regard, there are several differing interpretations and Allah ﷻ knows best who it could have been. We can merely make calculated guesses. He made it possible for the Jews who had been expelled by Nebuchadnezzar to relocate to Palestine and begin rebuilding Masjid Aqsa. For this he is known as the non-Jewish messiah. His empire stretched from Turkey in the west to Afghanistan and parts of what is today Pakistan in the east until the Indus River.

Greek Empire

200 or so years later you had Alexander from the small Greek kingdom of

Macedon. At the age of 20 he launched his military campaign, uniting the Greeks and putting together one of the largest empires in history. By 30, his empire stretched from Greece to India, including Afghanistan, Egypt, Persia and Turkey. When he died at the age of 32, he was the ruler of the largest empire ever seen and was undefeated in battle. Like Cyrus, some scholars identify him with Zul Qarnain of the Noble Quran.

His influence was tremendous. Cities founded by him still bear his name. 20 cities were named after him such as Alexandria in Egypt. Kandahar in Afghanistan was also originally called Alexandria. Herat, the third largest city in Afghanistan, was also named after him and eventually became an important intellectual capital of the Islamic world after the conquest of Timur. Its glory matched that of Florence in Italy. The Herat Citadel still exists and was originally built by Alexander. Many empires have used it as a headquarters in the last 2000 years. Very few western cities can boast such a rich and ancient heritage. There are also cities named after Alexander in Pakistan

and Turkey. Alexander established Gaza City and under his rule Gaza earned a reputation as a centre of Greek learning and philosophy. In fact, the last Greek kingdom to exist was the Greco Bactrian Kingdom in Afghanistan and parts of India, well after the European ones had ceased to exist.

The Silk Road

So Afghanistan has a fabulously wealthy heritage. The region of Khurasan comprises Afghanistan, parts of Iran and other regions in Central Asia. The city of Herat was called the Pearl of Khurasan. A 12th century description of the city showed that it had 359 colleges, 12,000 fully operational shops, 6,000 bath houses and around 444,000 houses. This at a time when Europe was still going through the Middle Ages.

The Silk Road played a significant role in the development of the civilisations of China, Korea, Japan, Iran, Europe, the Indian subcontinent, the Horn of Africa and Arabia. Afghanistan had a strategic position on this world trade route. Now is no different. Afghanistan is reputed to be sitting on \$1 trillion worth of rare minerals such as Lithium which is in high demand for use in items such as cellphones.

Arrival of Islam

When it comes to the Islamic period of Afghanistan, Islam spread along the Silk Road as it did through most of the

major trade routes. Countries on the route took rapidly to Islam and remain on Islam to this day. Afghanistan was no exception. The man who played a central role in bringing Islam to Afghanistan was Ahnaf ibn Qais ؓ. The Prophet ﷺ prayed for him, "Oh Allah forgive Ahnaf." (Ahmed) He accepted Islam in the time of the Prophet ﷺ but did not get the opportunity of seeing him. When he passed away in Kufa, Ibn Zubair ؓ said, "Today a great deal of wisdom has left." Muaawiya ؓ said regarding Ahnaf ؓ' influence over people, "If he gets angry, 100,000 men of his tribe the Banu Tameem get angry along with him without knowing the reason for his anger." Ahnaf ؓ was a charismatic leader. He played a significant role in the conquests of Persia in the time of Umar ؓ. He led the Muslim forces in completing the conquest of Khurasan and reached Herat in Afghanistan in 652 CE. By the time of Uthmaan ؓ, the Muslim army was in control of Afghanistan.

The Prophet ﷺ prophesied, "There will be many battles after me. Try to be in the battles which will take place in Khurasan and enter the city of Marwa (previously called Alexandria, now Merv in Turkmenistan according to some scholars) for it is a city established by Zul Qarnain and he prayed for blessing for it."

(Musnad Ahmed)

Khurasan has produced scientists such as Ibn Sina, Farabi, Biruni and others who were known for their contribution to maths, astronomy, medicine, physics, geography and geology. The renowned poet Rumi ؓ hailed from the region as did most of the great Imams of Hadith including Imam Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawood and Imam Ghazali rahimahumullah.

During the Muslim period, empires such as the Timurid Empire and the Moghul dynasty used Afghanistan as a base in their expansion. Two significant Muslim kingdoms were centred on Afghanistan:

- a. The Ghaznavid Empire (977-1186) stretched from India to Iran. The outstanding hero of this empire was Mahmud of Ghazni. His capital in Afghanistan almost rivalled the importance of Baghdad as an intellectual centre. He was responsible for spreading Islam in northern India.
- b. Ahmed Shah Durrani set up the kingdom of Afghanistan in 1747 and ruled over much of Pakistan, parts of Iran, the whole of Afghanistan and up to Kashmir. This could be regarded as the foundation of an Afghan state.

Graveyard of Empires

The country of Afghanistan (stan meaning the land of) now came into contact with the British Empire. The First Anglo-Afghan War 1839-1842 ended with the British being forced to retreat from Kabul. Out of the more than 16,000 soldiers and others with the army, only one European and a few Indian soldiers reached safety in Jalalabad. The rest were either killed or captured in one of Britain's worst defeats in their colonial ambitions.

In 1919 the British tried again. Despite having air power they still failed to conquer the country. Afghanistan remained independent and was never colonized.

In 1979 the Soviet Union invaded. At the end of this war, the poorly equipped Afghan fighters inflicted 26,000 deaths including 3,000 officers on the Russian forces, with another 54,000 wounded. 451 aircraft including 333 helicopters were destroyed along with 147 armoured tanks. The Soviets retreated in defeat after 10 years. The Americans came in 2001 and left 20 years later with nothing to show for it besides 73,000 US and allied forces killed.

After the fall of the Soviets the country descended into civil war between opposing war lords. After two years, Mullah Muhammad Omar ؒ and other Ulama and students

of Islam, disgusted at the infighting, set out to restore peace. They succeeded in taking control of the country within a few months and bringing safety and security. They eradicated the cultivation of poppy which is used to make opium, heroin and cocaine. Afghanistan is the source of 95% of the world's drugs like these. In 2000, Taliban cut off production in what the UN called the world's most successful anti-drug campaign. In 2001 the US invaded the country and the drug trade was restored.

A Valuable Lesson

One of the takeaway lessons from the fighting spirit of the Afghans is Tawakkul or trust in Allah ﷻ. Allah ﷻ is Al Wakeel, the One you hand over all your matters to knowing that only what He wishes will occur. Tawakkul is to use all your energy and make a full out effort to attain a goal, and then leave the results in the Hands of Allah ﷻ. The Afghans fought with whatever little means they had at hand. Their goal was to stay independent. Relying on Allah ﷻ means that we should never be afraid of attempting big goals. You have a dream, go for it. The Afghans took on mighty super powers but did not let this deter them.

Leaving out the means and expecting things to happen is not

Tawakkul but rather Ta'attul or being idle and useless. The Prophet ﷺ and the Sahaba ؓ did not abandon the outward means. They would prepare for battle and strive. Then they would say that Allah ﷻ is sufficient for us. In actual fact, the outward means are a blessing from Allah ﷻ such as having a skill or ability. So to leave it out and not use it would be a form of ingratitude to Allah ﷻ.

We also learn that we are not in control of the outcome. The Afghans strove hard but still had to endure brutal occupation. What Allah ﷻ wants to take place will occur, not what we desire. Allah ﷻ knows best what is best for us. The end result is an independence that Afghanistan has realized which few countries can boast of.

The region of Khurasan will play a crucial role in the events close to the last day:

a. Ibn Majah documents a Hadith which says that a nation will appear from the East with black flags. With them will be the Khalifah of Allah ﷻ, the Mahdi so pledge allegiance to him even if you have to crawl over ice to do so.

b. Tirmidhi records a narration stating that the army with black flags will emerge from Khurasan and will conquer until it reaches Palestine.

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WATER CRISIS



The Eastern Cape and in particular Port Elizabeth is facing an imminent water crisis. If no good rains fall soon, forecasts show that some areas of the city will have their taps running dry in 50 days' time.

WATER IS THE BUILDING BLOCK OF LIFE.

Allah ﷻ tells us in the Noble Quran 21:30 that He created all living things from water. The earth was lifeless and the skies were not giving rain in the early days of the creation of the world. Then rain started and vegetation flourished through which creatures got their sustenance. Water is a means of life. All things rely on water for survival and most have water in their makeup:

- a. 70% of the human body is water, the brain and heart are 73% water, the lungs 83% and even the bones are 31% water.
- b. Water covers 70% of the earth's surface. Water is liquid gold and water conflict has raged through history with sides fighting for control of water sources.

c. Water is also critical in everyday items in ways we might not know. Hidden water is the millions of litres that go into the manufacturing of consumer goods. Paper, plastic, metal and fabric all require water to manufacture.

A car requires 75,000 litres to manufacture, while a smartphone needs 12,000 litres – each component requires water in the manufacturing process. A t-shirt needs 2,500 litres while even oil requires 8 litres to every 1 litre or so of fuel to refine.

WATER IN THE HEREAFTER

Water will also be found in the Hereafter and will form an important part of the settings of Paradise. The Noble Quran describes the gardens of Paradise as having water flowing beneath them. In fact, even before we enter Paradise, we will be greeted with the water of the pond of Kauthar. Each Prophet will have his own pond of water to quench the thirst of his nation. The largest will be Kauthar, the pond of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. It will be as large as 700 km, whiter than silver, smell superior to musk, taste sweeter than

honey and once you drink from it you will never be thirsty again. Two streams from Paradise flow into it. (Muslim)

Highlighting the importance of water in our lives, the Noble Quran draws our attention in several verses to water being sent down from the skies as rain. The vegetation depends on this water for survival and in turn creatures as well.

THE WATER CYCLE AND THE WAY IT IS STRUCTURED, IS DESIGNED TO MAKE US ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE TRUE CONTROLLER IS ALLAH ﷻ:

- a. We are taught to make dua for rain. The Prophet ﷺ would pray, "Oh Allah, grant us rain." He would at times make dua in the Friday sermon, and at other times would lead the people in Salat ul Istisqa, or the prayer for rain. He would pray, "Oh Allah, grant us abundant rain, rain which fertilises the land, rain without delay." (Abu Dawood).
- b. When the winds blew, which is one of the signs that rain clouds could be on the way, the Prophet ﷺ would pray, "Oh Allah, grant me the good of the

wind, the good in it and the good it brings. And save me from the evil of it, the evil in it and the evil it brings." (Muslim)

c. When the rains would fall, he would pray, "Oh Allah grant us beneficial rain." (Bukhari)

d. When there would be severe rain, and we can see the devastation this can wreak, he would pray for the rain to go around the city rather than on it, and that it fall in the places where it would benefit the most, in our case the catchment areas, etc.

e. If it thundered he would pray for protection, "Oh Allah, do not kill us through Your Anger, nor destroy us with Your Punishment, but save us before that." (Bukhari)

f. After the rain had fallen, he would pray, "We have been given rain through the Grace and Mercy of Allah ﷻ." (Bukhari)

These are just some of the duas associated with rain. What we understand from here is our complete dependence on Allah ﷻ for the rain which we need for survival, from the very beginning of the cycle till the end.

THERE ARE TWO SUNNATS THAT WE CAN PRACTICE ON AT THE TIME OF RAIN:

1. The Prophet ﷺ would let some of the drops of rain fall directly on to his noble body to take blessing saying that they have recently come from my Lord. (Muslim) This is encouraged for the first rain of the season according to the Shafi scholars. After a drought, the Prophet ﷺ would let the rain drip onto his noble face and beard. (Bukhari)

2. It is an opportune moment to make dua at the time of rain. The Hadith informs us that two

duas are not rejected, the dua at the time the Athan is called, and the dua at the time of rain. (Mustadrak) Plan your duas to especially coincide with these moments of acceptance.

ONCE WE GET THE WATER, WE NEED TO SHOW GRATITUDE FOR IT. AGAIN THE SUNNAH IS THE KEY:

1. Sit and drink water or eat food. (Muslim)
2. Recite Bismillah before drinking. (Bukhari)
3. Drink with the right hand. (Bukhari)
4. Drink in sips of three or more in odd number. (Bukhari)

The second component of gratitude is not to waste water. The hadith tells us not to waste water for a good deed like Wudhu even if we are on the banks of a fast flowing river. (Tirmidhi) Practicing on this, and the Sunnah number of times for washing of each limb is extremely effective in combating the whispers of Walahaan, the devil present at the time of Wudhu who tries to make us doubt if we have washed properly. (Tirmidhi) Don't entertain these doubts, nor spending time debating or analysing them.

The third component of giving thanks for the water is not to pollute it. We are forbidden from urinating in stagnant water. (Muslim) Water conservation is a laudable and praiseworthy act in Islam. The Prophet ﷺ would use 1,25 litres of water for Wudhu and 5 litres for a bath, sometimes more, sometimes less. Our taps run at 6 litres a minute!

ONE OF THE SUNNAH WAYS TO

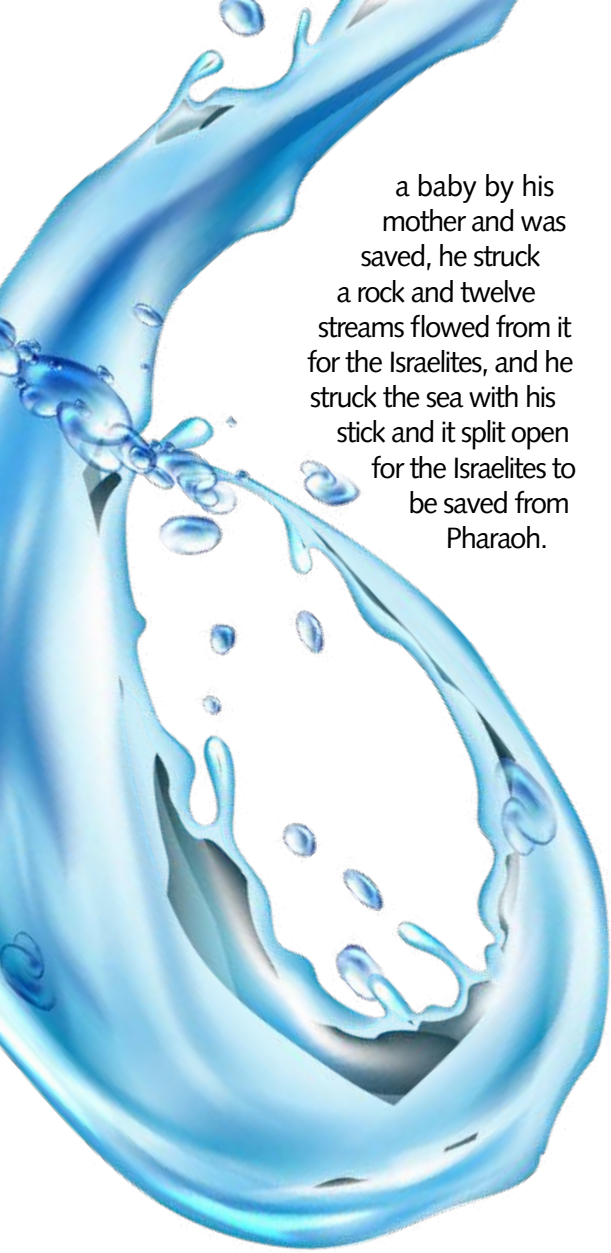
ENJOY WATER IS IN THE FORM OF NABIZ.

This was a favourite drink of the Prophet ﷺ. It is made by soaking either raisins or dates in water overnight. This should not be soaked longer than 12 hours or it will begin to ferment. It makes a refreshing, energizing sweet drink. You can drink the water and eat the dates or raisins, or blend them together and drink the mixture. We should drink this occasionally at least with the intention of following the Sunnah.

Some of the rivers of this world have their origins in Paradise. "The Euphrates and the Nile are from among the rivers of Paradise." (Hadith) Some scholars opine that like how we have our origin in Paradise, so too do these rivers.

The best water on the face of earth is Zam Zam. It is a nourishing food and a healing for illness. (Al Mujam al Kabeer) This well in Makkah Mukarramah, which has served millions of litres of centuries with no need for any purification system can be drank while standing.

Prophet Musa ﷺ was given several miracles related to water. He was placed into the river as



a baby by his mother and was saved, he struck a rock and twelve streams flowed from it for the Israelites, and he struck the sea with his stick and it split open for the Israelites to be saved from Pharaoh.

WHEN WE GO THROUGH A DROUGHT, WE NEED TO ANALYSE AND UNDERSTAND WHY IT HAPPENS, AND WHY RAIN IS WITHHELD.

- a. When a nation is deceitful in business practises they will be afflicted with famine, price hikes and an oppressive leader. (Mustadrak) This indicates a possible reason for our drought, high cost of living and incompetent, corrupt government.
- b. When a nation does not pay its Zakaat, they will be deprived of rain. (Mustadrak)

c. We are deprived of sustenance in general on account of committing sins wilfully, openly and persistently. (Ahmad)

d. When adultery and extra marital relations become a general practice in any community, they are plagued with drought as a punishment. (Ahmad)

We need to collectively turn to Allah ﷻ in making amends for our sins, and turning our backs on our old lives of sin.

SOME WAYS WE CAN BENEFIT FROM WATER IN THIS WORLD AND THE NEXT:

1. Providing people with water is the best charity. (Abu Dawood)
2. The Hadith tells us, "Protect your wealth by discharging your Zakaat, treat your sick through charity, and prepare for calamities in advance by engaging in Dua." When someone in the family gets sick, then while resorting to medical treatment and reciting the Noble Quran, we should also give charity. One effective form of charity would be to provide water to those in need.
3. Gifting water is a way of securing continuous reward for someone who has passed away. Sa'ad ibn Ubadah ؓ's mother passed away. When he asked the Prophet ﷺ what charity would be best, he was told providing water. As a result he built a well in his mother's name. (Abu Dawood)
4. Water can be a means of sins being forgiven. A prostitute was forgiven for giving a thirsty

dog water to drink from a well. (Bukhari). Imagine the effectiveness in giving water to human beings in need.

5. Water can be a means of sharing in someone's reward. When you feed someone a drink of water at the time of breaking his fast, you get the reward of his fast while he also loses nothing. We need to look for opportunities to share in the reward of others by assisting them in carrying out those acts.

WATER IS USED IN MANY THOUGHT-PROVOKING EXAMPLES:

- a. "The example of the Muslim nation is like the rain. It is uncertain if the first of it or the last of it is better." (Tirmidhi) This does not mean that the latter generations are better than the Sahaba ؓm, but that like how the first of them spread benefit by conveying Islam, so too will the last.
- b. The Prophet ﷺ used the example of a river running outside one's house. If a person bathed in it five times a day, no trace of dirt will remain on him. In a similar manner, if a person performs his five daily Salaah, it will remove all traces of sin from him. (Bukhari)
- c. Moulana Rumi ؒ said, "Be like the night in concealing other people's faults, and have generosity like running water which gives to all."



SEARCHING FOR Salahuddeen

The Palestinian crisis is now over a **100 years** old. Inevitably, when the topic comes up we hear of two names:

01 Umar ibn Khattab ؓ who first conquered Jerusalem for the Muslims. It then remained in Muslim hands for around **456** years before the Christian crusaders captured it.

02 The second name is Salahuddeen Ayyubi ؓ who liberated Aqsa after **93 years** of Christian control. It then stayed in Muslim control for the next **700 or so years** until **1917** when the British invaded. There was a period where it fell into Jordanian control until **1967** when the Zionist forces captured it.

When we speak of western military heroes, you have names like Winston Churchill who is their hero of World War II, but whose human rights track record is pathetic. Unlike him, the Muslim heroes were an embodiment of upright character. Umar ؓ would walk the streets of Madinah Munawwarah at night to assess the needs of the citizens. Likewise, Salahuddeen's character and piety made him stand out, especially at the time he was living.

To give some background and context, take a look at his belligerents:

THE POPES

The pope ordered the crusade against the Holy Lands despite the fact that there was relative calm and freedom in Palestine. Peaceful co-existence was the order of the day. To understand the evil that is the papacy, one needs to read the history of the popes. After **2,000 years** as head of the Catholic Church, one would have

expected to see some sense of moral values and ethics.

a. In the early **10th century**, the mistresses of the popes were calling the shots.

b. In **974**, Pope Boniface VII robbed the Vatican Basilica and fled.

c. Pope Stephen VII exhumed the body of Pope Formosus in the 9th century, put it on trial, had some fingers chopped off and the body dragged in the street.

d. Pope Sergius III had two other popes murdered.

Popes like Urban II who called for the crusades claimed Christ was commanding it through them, and promised through the supposed power of God vested in them that if any crusader died his sins would be forgiven. Thomas Fuller gives a glimpse into the real reasons: in the clash between the two centres of Christianity, Rome and Constantinople, the Vatican wanted to subjugate the Eastern Church in Constantinople.

THE KNIGHTS

The fighters who took part in the crusades were supposed to have been pious warriors. When they conquered Jerusalem from the Fatimid Shia rulers in **1099** they slaughtered 70,000 hapless civilians even in the precincts of Aqsa.

a. King Richard, of whom the British seem inordinately proud, beheaded more than 3,000 Muslim captives in view of Salahuddeen's forces at the Massacre of Ayyadieh. These

included women and children.

b. The crusaders also looked for targets among Europeans who they accused of paganism and witchcraft such as the Cathars and in the sack of Constantinople in **1204**. The popes spoke not a word of censure against any of these atrocities and we have yet to hear of an apology.

c. The Templar Knights were a blueprint for the worst excesses of colonialism, amassing wealth and power not only outwardly but also behind the scenes through plans and plots. When King Philip IV of France brought them down in **1307**, the charges against them included homosexuality and financial corruption. Have they actually been destroyed, or does the fact that the Free Masons have much of these medieval knights' symbols and traditions show otherwise?



by the Zionists, fragmented Arab governments with the Shia state of Iran thrown into the equation and its conflicts with the Sunnis on various fronts.

Salahuddeen comes onto this scene. He signs up under Nuruddeen Zangi, the successor to Imaduddeen who took Edessa from the crusaders. Salahuddeen's uncle, Asaduddeen Shirkuh was Nuruddeen's bravest general. He was chosen as the vizier of the Fatimid rulers after assisting them in their battles against the crusaders. Salahuddeen succeeds him in this position and seizes the opportunity to neutralize the Shia threat by overthrowing the Fatimids in **1171**

So this was the man. If it had to be only down to political strategy and military prowess, it would have seemed to be enough to liberate the land. But Aqsa required a personality with a spiritual connection to Allah Ta'ala.

THE LEGACY

His biographer was Qadhi Bahauddeen Ibn Shaddad, who chronicled his remarkable qualities:

1. He noted that Salahuddeen was extremely punctual with his Salaah. He never missed praying it in congregation, and when he ill he got an Imam to lead him. He would force himself to stand and pray.
2. He was punctual with the optional night prayers of Tahajjud and would encourage his soldiers to pray it as well.
3. He was generous and spent all his wealth on the military struggle to

liberate Palestine.

4. He did not meet the obligation of having to pay Zakaat due to hardly having any personal wealth. When he died, he only left behind 40 silver coins, one gold coin, his horse and armour and weapons. He had no property, land or house.

5. He had a remarkable quality of mercy, forgiving the crusaders when he liberated Jerusalem. He was the epitome of chivalry.

6. He was brave, riding between the army ranks while the battle raged.

7. He loved to listen to the Noble Quran and in his final illness, verses would be recited near him. He read the Shahada and left this world.

He was buried with his sword so that, on the Day of Judgment, the whole of humanity will be able to see the liberator of Aqsa. And what a sword! Damascus steel was legendary. Tough and resistant to shattering while being capable of having a sharp edge. The art has been lost, and tests of samples have unearthed carbon nanotubes in the composition.

We see a remarkable set of circumstances combining to fall in the favour of Salahuddeen liberating Aqsa. In actual fact this is the divine assistance of Allah Ta'ala when you make up your mind to do something for His sake. The window period was opportune and Salahuddeen took the offer.

We cannot keep living off the glow of his legacy. We all have the capacity to be the next Salahuddeen. Abu Hassan Nadwi رحمہ اللہ said that the secret of his success was that he knew nothing but the language of the Noble Quran, the language of faith, the language of Paradise. We all have the capacity to emulate that.

THE SHIA

The Fatimid Shias were in control of Egypt at the time of Salahuddeen and continuously waged war against the Sunni Seljuks who fought on behalf of the Abbasid Khilafah. The Shia state refused to acknowledge the Sunni Khalifah. This is much like how the British could invade in **1917** once the Ottoman Khilafah had been brought down. The Fatimids had long had an alliance with the Byzantine Christians against the Sunni Abbasids. Ibn al Athir recounts how the Fatimids invited the Christians to invade Syria to create a buffer zone against the Sunnis.

In August **1098** Jerusalem fell to the Fatimid Shias and barely a year later the crusaders were in Jerusalem. The miscalculation of the Fatimids was to think that their Byzantine allies would come to their help, little realising that the crusading forces of the pope were a different kettle of fish.

THE ARABS

The Arabs of Salahuddeen's time were disunited. The mighty Seljuk Sultanate was fragmented into small states each ruled by separate leader.

This scene can be transplanted to what we have today – the occupation

HADITH

VERIFICATION SERIES 08

In this series we bring you a selection of topics from hadithanswers.com



WIPING THE HANDS AFTER WASHING THEM BEFORE EATING

Question: Is it established from any Hadith that it is Sunnah not dry the hands after washing them before eating?

Answer: I have not come across this in any Hadith.

However, the Fuqaha [Jurists] have recommended that a person should not wipe his hands after washing them before eating. It could therefore be classified as a recommended act.

(Refer: *Al Ikhtiyar Li Ta'lilil Mukhtar*, vol. 4 pg. 180-181)

Kindly refer to a Mufti/Darul Ifta for a Fatwa on this matter.

And Allah Ta'ala Knows best.

ANGELS MAKE DUA FOR THAT HOUSEHOLD THAT HAS HONEY?

Question: Is this an authentic Hadith: Nabi ﷺ said: "By Him in whose hand is my soul, eat honey, for there is no house in which honey is kept for which the angels will not ask for mercy."

Answer: This narration is recorded in Isma'ilis Al Mu'jam on the authority of Sayyiduna Salman ؓ as part of a longer narration.

However, the Muhaddithun have declared the narration a fabrication. It is therefore not suitable to quote.

(Refer: *Tanzihush Shari'ah*, vol. 2 pg. 239 and *Tadhkiratul Mawdu'at of al Fatani*, pg. 150)

And Allah Ta'ala Knows best.

MELON AND CUCUMBER WITH DATES

Question: Is eating melon and fresh dates and cucumber and fresh dates two separate Sunnahs or is it one and the same Hadith?

Answer: These are two separate Hadiths. Rasulullah ﷺ ate melon as well as cucumber with fresh dates, on separate occasions.

1) Sayyiduna 'Abdullah ibn Ja'far ibn Abi Talib (radiyallahu 'anhuma) said: "I saw Nabi ﷺ eating fresh dates with cucumber." (*Sahih Bukhari*, Hadith: 5440, *Sahih Muslim*, Hadith: 2043)

2) Sayyidah 'Aishah (radiyallahu 'anha) reports: "Rasulullah ﷺ would eat melon with ripe dates, saying: "The heat of this [dates] neutralises the coolness of that [melon]." (*Sunan Abi Dawud*, Hadith: 3832)

And Allah Ta'ala Knows best.

EATING WATERMELON BEFORE MEALS

Question: Are these benefits of watermelon authentic?

"Eating watermelon before eating cleanses the stomach thoroughly and completely removes illnesses."

Answer: Imam Ibn 'Asakir ؒ

has recorded this as a Hadith of Rasulullah ﷺ and has expressed reservation with regard to the authenticity. (*Tarikh Dimashq*, vol. 6 pg. 102 and vol. 36 pg. 141)

Other Muhaddithun have also declared this Hadith a fabrication.

(Refer: *Lisanul Mizan*, vol. 1 pg. 699, number: 911, *Dhaylul La-Alil Masnu'ah*, vol. 2 pg. 541, Hadith: 649 and *Faydul Qadir*, Hadith: 3212) 'Allamah Munawi ؒ has cited this as the statement of some doctors. This should therefore be quoted as the statement of a doctor and not as a Hadith of Nabi (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam). (*Faydul Qadir*, Hadith: 6998)

And Allah Ta'ala knows best.

TYPES OF GOURD MENTIONED IN HADITH

Question: What exactly are Ad-Dubba and Al-Qar'u which are mentioned in the Hadith to be beloved to Rasulullah (sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam)?

Answer: The words Ad-Dubba and Al-Qar'u are synonyms that refer to a particular type of gourd [including but not exclusive to squash, pumpkin, or calabash].

(Refer: *Fathul Bari*, Hadith: 5379, *Sharhush Shamail of 'Allamah Bajuri*, Hadith: 160, and *Arabic Lexicon* vol. 3 pg. 842)

And Allah Ta'ala knows best.

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